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ABSTRACT

The final report of this federally supported 3-year direct research project describes products developed in the project's investigation of inclusive education of students with severe disabilities and models of collaboration in inclusive urban schools. Year 1 resulted in research on inclusive education in the context of school reform. During Year 2 a program evaluation of a multi-component intervention found that consistent implementation of plans of academic and social support by team members was associated with increases in student academic skills, self-confidence, assertiveness, and social interactions. During Year 3 focus group research methodology in Northern California urban middle schools was used to identify restructuring and additional resources needed in the areas of site leadership, funding for school programs, collaboration, parent involvement, professional development, teacher preparation, discipline, and supplies and materials. Also, during Year 3 a video was produced which shows the restructuring efforts of two California schools in which general, special, and bilingual educators work together. The videotape is included. Two journal articles produced for the project are appended. The articles are: (1) "'Community' Is What I Think Everyone Is Talking About" (written by Pam Hunt, Anne Hirose-Hatae, Kathy Doering, Patricia Karasoff, and Lori Goetz published in PRO-ED, Inc.'s "Remedial and Special Education (RASE)" v21, n5, Sept/Oct 2000, p305-317) and (2) "Across-Program Collaboration to Support Students with and without Disabilities in a General Education Classroom" (written by Pam Hunt, Kathy Doering, Anne Hirose-Hatae, Julie Maier, and Lori Goetz published in The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps' "Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (JASH)" v26, n4, 2001, p240-256). (DB)

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FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Directed Research Projects:
Educating Children with Severe Disabilities in Inclusive Settings

CFDA No. 84.023D

Inclusive Reform in Urban Schools
Through Peer-to-Peer Support From School Teams

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Project Officer: Anne Smith

Project Dates: October, 1997 - September, 2000
No-Cost Time Extension: October, 2000 – December, 2001

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Inclusive Reform in Urban Schools
Through Peer-to-Peer Support From School Teams

I. Project Summary

The purpose of the Directed Research Project was to accomplish the following: (1) an investigation of the implementation of inclusive education for students with severe disabilities as part of systemic educational reform efforts in targeted urban schools, and (2) development and evaluation of models of general, bilingual, and special education collaboration to meet the needs of all students in inclusive schools. During Year 1 educational team members and school reform personnel from an inclusive elementary school participated in focus group activities yielding a data base for thematic analysis using qualitative research methods. This analysis provided empirical outcomes for a research paper that described inclusive education in the context of reformed schools and the perceived contributions of unified reform to the educational and social benefit of all students. The paper has been published in the Journal of Remedial and Special Education.

During Year 2 we conducted a program evaluation of a multi-component intervention using general education/special education collaborative teaming to increase the academic achievement and social participation of students with and without disabilities. Evaluation outcomes suggested that consistent implementation of plans of academic and social support developed and implemented by team members was associated with increases in academic skills, self-confidence and assertiveness, social interactions with classmates, and demonstrations of pride in academic accomplishments. The research paper will be published in the Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps this spring.

During Year 3 we used focus group research methods to identify restructuring and additional resources needed to meet the educational and social needs of students in urban middle schools in Northern California. The participants made recommendations for school restructuring

and additional resources in the areas of site leadership, funding for school programs, supports to meet the needs of all students, collaboration, parent involvement, professional development, teacher preparation, discipline, and supplies and materials. The research report is in development.

Also during year 3 a video, Restructuring for All the Kids, was filmed that describes the restructuring efforts of two California schools to build inclusive schools in which general, special, and bilingual educators work together to meet the educational needs of all students. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company will handle distribution of the video.

II. Project Accomplishments

The accomplishments of the project in the areas of **Research Papers, Video Development, and Dissemination Activities** will be described below.

1. Research Papers

Year 1: Hunt, P., Hirose-Hatae, A., Doering, K., Karasoff, P., & Goetz, L. (2000). "'Community' Is What I Think Everyone Is Talking About." Remedial and Special Education, 21 (5), 305-317.

Focus group research methods were used to investigate the alignment of inclusive education with other reform efforts at a targeted urban school, and the contributions of unified school reform to the educational and social benefit of all the students attending the school. General and bilingual education teachers, the inclusion support teacher and instructional assistants, parents of students with and without disabilities, and the principal from the targeted school (with additional participation from the principal and reform personnel from a second school in the district) participated in focus group activities that yielded a data base for thematic analysis using qualitative research methods. A number of procedures were employed to verify and validate the

data collection process and findings. Emergent themes are described and interpreted in context of the establishment of a school community that supports the academic and social development of all students.

Year 2: Hunt, P., Doering, K., Hirose-Hatae, A., Maier, J., & Goetz, L. (in press). Across-Program Collaboration to Support Students With and Without Disabilities in a General Education Classroom. Journal of the Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps.

This study is an evaluation of a multi-component intervention using general education/special education collaborative teaming to increase the academic achievement and social participation of students with and without disabilities. A team of general, special, and bilingual educators, parents, and an outreach consultant developed Unified Plans of Support (UPS) for three students whose academic performance was substantially below grade level and whose social participation was limited. Effectiveness of the support plans was evaluated through multiple data sources including behavioral observations, team interviews, and analyses of student work samples. Evaluation outcomes suggested that consistent implementation of the plans of academic and social support by members of the UPS Team was associated with increases in academic skills, self-confidence and assertiveness, social interactions with classmates, and demonstrations of pride in academic accomplishments. The implications of across-program and across-school collaboration were discussed in the research report, as well as the need for future research on models of resource reallocation to meet the needs of all students in general education classrooms.

Year 3: Hunt, P., Smith, A., Doering, K., & O'Farrell, N. (2002). Meeting the Educational and Social Needs of Diverse Populations of Students in Urban Middle Schools in Northern California. Manuscript in development.

Focus group research methods were used to identify restructuring and additional resources needed to meet the educational and social needs of students in urban middle schools in Northern California. Two schools in the San Francisco Bay Area were selected to participate. Both had diverse populations of students, many of whom were faced with the educational disadvantages associated with poverty, minority racial/ethnic identify, limited English proficiency, and learning differences. Two groups of teachers at each school and one group each of parents, administrators, and categorical program staff or directors of school-community collaboratives participated in focus group activities that yielded a data base for thematic analysis using qualitative research methods. The participants made recommendations for school restructuring and additional resources in the areas of site leadership, funding for school programs, supports to meet the needs of all students, collaboration, parent involvement, professional development, teacher preparation, discipline, and supplies and materials. A number of procedures were used to verify and validate the data collection process and findings. Emergent themes are described and interpreted in the context of recommendations for policy and restructuring changes needed to meet the needs of students across cultural, language, socio-economic status, and ability differences--differences represented by the majority of students in urban middle schools.

2. Video Development

Funding from our project and the California Department of Education was used to create a video describing an elementary and a middle school in California that restructured to utilize resources from special, general, and bilingual education to meet the needs of all students in inclusive classrooms. The focus of the video is on establishing a school community in which (1) all students are valued members, (2) diversity (cultural, language, ability) is celebrated, (3) resources are reallocated to ensure that all students succeed academically and socially, and (4) parents are active participants. The video will be a useful tool for promoting discussion of

models of across-program collaboration as well as providing many examples of types of collaborative partnerships and positive outcomes for students. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company will handle video distribution.

3. Dissemination Activities

Dissemination of project findings occurred through publication of research reports in relevant journals, dissemination of published research papers by the California State-Wide Systems Change Project, distribution of the video on general education/special education collaborative teaming by the California Department of Education and by Brookes Publishing Company, presentations at state and local educational conferences, and inclusion in the teacher preparation programs at San Francisco State University and the Joint Doctoral Program in Special Education at the University of California, Berkeley, and San Francisco State University.